

Southeast Arizona 2003 Project to Mitigate Environmental Degradation Caused by Illegal Immigrants



Trash left by illegal immigrants at a pick-up point in the Ironwood Forest National Monument

End-of-Year Report



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to
Mitigate Environmental Degradation
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Executive Summary

Thanks to Congressman Jim Kolbe and other Arizona Representatives, the House Appropriations Committee included \$1 million for BLM in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for 2003. In Conference Committee, the amount was reduced to \$700,000. A Rescission reduced it further to \$695,000. This funding was received by BLM in March 2003. This report summarizes the accomplishments made in 2003.

Cooperative Agreements have been made with the Youth Corps of Southern Arizona (YCOSA--\$103,000); Malpai Borderlands Group (\$90,000); National Park Service (\$20,000); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (\$20,000); Cochise (\$43,600), Santa Cruz (\$35,000) and Graham (\$35,000) counties; the town of Marana (\$35,000); and others to help pick up trash left by smugglers and illegal immigrants and to repair damage caused by them. Arrangements have been made with several sanitary land fills to receive the trash. Trash bags, gloves and other protective equipment have been purchased and distributed to those who are helping with this effort.

Significant progress has been made. Tons of trash have been removed, fences and gates have been repaired, barriers have been repaired or installed and plans for future efforts have been developed.

Due to the hundreds, if not thousands, of smugglers and illegal immigrants using BLM and adjacent lands in southeast Arizona each day, BLM management felt it was essential to provide additional security for crews working in remote areas. As a result, \$70,000 was used to increase BLM's law enforcement presence during cleanup and rehabilitation efforts.

To improve communications in remote areas where rehabilitation work is occurring, BLM also purchased two radio repeater stations, 24 radios, and seven satellite telephones.

A "kick-off" Earth Day event in the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area recognized the special funding provided as a result of Congressman Jim Kolbe's efforts.

¹ Also referred to as undocumented aliens (UDA) and undocumented immigrants (UDI).

About 35 cubic yards of trash were collected by volunteers that day from four different sites. Also, repairs were made to a damaged vehicle barrier adjacent to the railroad, and about one-quarter mile of barrier fence was constructed.

Through October 2003, Conservation Associates working for BLM, YCOSA crews, National Public Land Day volunteers, Humane Borders volunteers, and others collected and removed hundreds of cubic yards of trash from numerous sites within the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and Ironwood Forest National Monument. Work crews also removed trash and repaired damage within Coronado National Forest and Coronado National Memorial and elsewhere.



Before



After

A typical heavily littered illegal immigrant rest area before and after cleanup by a Conservation Associate working for BLM and a YCOSA crew.

Between June and December 2003, Malpai Borderlands Group had a crew of three high school students picking up trash on various ranches in the San Bernardino Valley, east of Douglas. They averaged hauling three pickup loads to the local landfill per day.

The students also received on-the-job training for restoration of damaged watershed areas. They were later joined by a five-man restoration crew. The restoration work includes repairs of damaged fences, gates, water improvements and eroded areas.

In addition, two ranch families have picked up trash and replaced fences and gates that had been knocked down and damaged by drug smuggler's vehicles and illegal immigrants. A half-mile of destroyed fence has been replaced.

Through December 6, 2003, Cochise County collected more than three tons of illegally dumped materials. Cleanup will continue in 2004. Graham County built a trash trailer and established a citizens committee to identify sites and plan for cleanup and restoration projects in 2004. Santa Cruz County will spend their cleanup funds in 2004. Most of the funding received by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also will be spent in 2004.

Marana has been performing work for BLM one or two days a week in the Ironwood Forest National Monument and under the current agreement will continue this schedule for the remainder of 2004 or until the current funding is consumed.

Background

At the request of Congress (and as initiated by Congressman Jim Kolbe), the Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Justice submitted a, *"Report to the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations on Impacts Caused by Undocumented Aliens Crossing Federal Lands in Southeast Arizona,"* on April 29, 2002. This report included a draft coordinated plan to mitigate damages caused by smugglers of controlled substances and undocumented aliens in southeast Arizona. Estimated needs for the first year of implementation of the draft plan total \$23.5 million and more than 90 Full Time Equivalents (FTE). The first-year estimate for BLM was \$3.8 million and 24 FTE. The House Appropriations Committee (thanks to Congressman Kolbe and other Arizona Representatives) included \$1 million for BLM in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for 2003. In Conference Committee, the amount was reduced to \$700,000. A Rescission reduced it further to \$695,000. This funding was received in March 2003. This, in a number of instances, resulted in Cooperative Agreements being finalized and money transferred to other agencies and organizations late in FY2003. Thus, much of the work will continue through a good portion of FY2004.

Cooperative Agreements have been made with the Youth Corps of Southern Arizona; Malpai Borderlands Group; National Park Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Cochise, Santa Cruz and Graham counties; the town of Marana; and others to help pick up trash left by smugglers and illegal immigrants and to repair damage caused by them. Arrangements have been made with several sanitary land fills to receive the trash. Trash bags, gloves and other protective equipment have been purchased and distributed to those who are helping with this effort.

Significant progress has been made. Tons of trash have been removed, fences and gates have been repaired, barriers have been repaired or installed and plans for future efforts have been developed. This report summarizes the accomplishments made in 2003. (Reporting dates vary by organization).

Bureau of Land Management

Security Detail

Due to the hundreds, if not thousands, of smugglers of controlled substances and illegal immigrants using BLM and adjacent lands in southeast Arizona each day, BLM management was concerned that crews involved in cleanup and rehabilitation efforts

could be at risk. Therefore, management felt it was essential to increase BLM's law enforcement capability to provide additional security for crews working in remote areas. Without such security, certain border areas could not be cleaned up without undue risks to the employees, volunteers and other partners doing the work. As a result, \$70,000 was used to increase BLM's law enforcement presence during cleanup and rehabilitation efforts, and to provide emergency care to any persons found in distress in the southern Arizona deserts. Other indirect goals were to increase the law enforcement presence to serve as a deterrent for illegal immigrant and drug smuggling, prevent additional resource damage and trash dumping, and provide increased visitor and employee safety on public lands.

During a period from July 6, 2003, to September 20, 2003, two additional Rangers were assigned to the Tucson Field Office and one additional Ranger was assigned to the Phoenix Field Office. Rangers brought from other areas into southeastern Arizona worked over 600 hours of overtime, and contributed over 1,200 hours of base time toward the patrols. Rangers from Phoenix, Tucson and a Special Agent from the Arizona State Office worked approximately 800 hours of overtime patrolling in the impacted areas of southeastern Arizona.

Listed below are statistics from this time period taken from Significant Activity Reports:

• Stolen vehicles recovered	6
• Vehicles impounded tied to illegal immigrant smuggling	53
• Illegal immigrants detained for U.S. Border Patrol	192
• Pounds of marijuana seized (3 seizures)	6,254
• Assaults on BLM Ranger (by vehicle)	1
• Weapons seized	3
• Backup to assault of Border Patrol officer	1
• First aide provided injured persons	2
• Assist recovery of illegal immigrant exposure fatalities	11

Communications Equipment

To minimize the possibility of detection, smugglers and illegal immigrants many times use southern Arizona's more remote areas as they travel north to their pick-up points. These well-used routes contain heavy concentrations of litter, human waste and resource damage, which adversely affect the experience of legitimate visitors as well as potentially causing illness or other harmful effects in wildlife and livestock.

These remote areas often have little or no radio or cell phone communications capability. To help ensure the safety of persons cleaning up the concentrations of litter and repairing resource damage caused by smugglers and illegal immigrants in these back-country areas, BLM purchased two radio repeater stations, 24 radios, and seven satellite telephones.

The two repeater stations have been purchased and will be installed to increase radio communications coverage in two areas previously without communications capability

and within areas where much of the cleanup and repair of damage is taking place. The radios expanded our communications capability to allow work crews and their support to have radio communications where available. The satellite telephones are being used in cases of emergency where no radio communications are available.

Southeast Arizona Earth Day Event, April 22, 2003

An Earth Day event in the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, which was held on April 22, 2003, yielded about 35 cubic yards of trash from four different sites around the area. Also, repairs were made to a damaged vehicle barrier adjacent to the railroad, and about one-quarter mile of barrier fence was constructed.

The event was a kick off to recognize the special funding provided as a result of Congressman Jim Kolbe's efforts.

Special guests included Kit Kimball, who is from the Secretary of the Interior's Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs. Other special guests were Bernadette Polley, from Congressman Kolbe's Sierra Vista Office; BLM Arizona State Director Elaine Zielinski; Pat Call, Chairman of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors; and BLM Arizona Associate State Director Carl Rountree.

About 20 groups and agencies participated, including representatives from the Coronado National Forest, Fort Huachuca, Friends of the San Pedro, The Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, Sierra Vista Ranger District, Southern Arizona Bird Observatory, Upper San Pedro Partnership, U.S. Border Patrol, SP&SW Railway, the Malpai Borderlands Group, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Youth Corps of Southern Arizona (YCOSA) provided a group of young men and women to assist with the clean up, and the Cochise County prison crew provided 10 workers. About 40 volunteers pitched in for the clean up work. BLM staff from its Tucson Field Office and San Pedro Project Office provided logistical support, planning, transportation, security and refreshments.



Arizona BLM State Director, staff and volunteers discussing litter cleanup on Earth Day.

Volunteers gathered at a BLM site adjacent to the San Pedro Inn, near the Hereford parking lot to sign in and be directed to project locations. The groups returned to the site for refreshments and to hear remarks from special guests around noon, and then returned to the cleanup projects for another few hours.

Several media attended including the *Sierra Vista Herald* and the *Arizona Daily Star* newspapers, which both generated several news articles.

Student Conservation Association

Three Conservation Associates with the Student Conservation Association were hired to identify, organize and facilitate illegal immigrant trash clean-up within the BLM Tucson Field Office. As of October 27, 2003, these Conservation Associates worked a combined total of 1,367 hours. Their contract is for a total of 1,700 hours and runs through July 2004. They have helped with the organization and clean-up of more than 140 cubic yards of trash during this time and they have identified numerous other sites for future cleanup and repair work.

San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area

Between July 30 and October 17, 2003, Conservation Associates working for BLM, YCOSA crews, National Public Land Day volunteers and Humane Borders volunteers collected and removed 109.5 cubic yards of trash from numerous sites within the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.



YCOSA crew carrying out bags of trash from the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.

See Appendix A for additional details and photos.

Ironwood Forest National Monument

On September 13, 2003, Humane Borders provided 11 volunteers (88 volunteer hours) to remove an estimated 8 cubic yards of trash and 13 tires from BLM lands (Little Ranch) bordering the Ironwood Forest National Monument and the Tohono O’odham Nation.

Humane Borders is a non-profit organization whose mission it is to work to create a just and humane border environment. Members respond with humanitarian assistance to those who are risking their lives and safety crossing the United States border with Mexico.

From October 14 through 17, 2003, six YCOSA crew members provided 240 hours of work removing waste and reclaiming damaged soils and vegetation from illegal cross-country vehicle travel on lands within and bordering the Ironwood Forest National Monument. The YCOSA crew camped in the National Monument for three nights, working four, 10 hour days. A total of 27 cross-country smuggling two-tracks (“roads”) were reclaimed; and 16 ½ tires, one car battery, one five-gallon container of gasoline, two syringes, two couches, five mattresses, one exercise bike, one aquarium, one television, one washing machine and 37 bags of litter were removed.

See Appendix B for additional details and photos.

Dumpster Maintenance by Waste Management Trash Removal Service

Thirty-yard roll-off dumpsters at three locations within the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area have been dumped four times for an estimated 120 cubic yards of illegal immigrant trash.

Four-yard dumpsters at five locations within the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area have been dumped weekly from June through October 2003, for an estimated 20 cubic yards of illegal immigrant trash.

Thirty-yard dumpsters at two locations within the Ironwood Forest National Monument have been dumped five times between June and the end of October 2003, for an estimated 66 cubic yards of trash.



A thirty-yard dumpster at Aqua Dulce Road and a pickup were loaded with trash from a clean up in Ironwood Forest National Monument December 1-5, 2003, by a YCOSA crew.

Materials and Supplies

BLM purchased 25,000 heavy duty lime-green trash bags for illegal immigrant waste removal. Many of these have been distributed to our partners in this effort, including the agencies and organizations mentioned herein.



Fifteen lime-green bags of trash, along with tires, one five-gallon water jug full of fuel and one car battery were collected on October 16, 2003.

BLM also purchased bi-lingual (and Spanish only) signs to help educate migrants of the dangers they face and to encourage them to protect the fragile desert resources.



Example of a warning sign.

Future Clean-up and Repair Projects

Future clean-up projects include 15 sites of high trash concentration in the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area; three sites, two with high concentrations and one extending the entire length of Cienega Creek within Las Cienegas National Conservation Area; and 13 sites totaling approximately 4, 500 acres within Ironwood Forest National Monument.

Youth Corps of Southern Arizona (YCOSA)

An agreement between BLM and YCOSA (\$103,000) provided eight-person to 15-person crews for approximately 17 weeks to clean up trash and repair damage caused by smugglers and illegal immigrants. As of October 27, 2003, these crews had completed 82 hours of cleanup and repair work in the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, 40 hours in Ironwood Forest National Monument, 40 hours on Coronado National Forest and eight hours on the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. Additional work is scheduled in these areas, Coronado National Memorial and Cochise County through May 2004.



YCOSA crew picking up trash on the Ironwood Forest National Monument.

See Appendices A, B, and F for additional details and photos.

Malpai Borderlands Group

BLM entered into an Assistance Agreement with the Malpai Borderlands Group for \$90,000. Between June and December 2003, work crews spent \$5,100 cleaning up trash and \$48,800 on restorations and repairs. Thus, a balance of approximately \$36,100 is available for use in the remainder of FY2004.

The Malpai Borderlands Group had a crew of three high school students picking up trash on various ranches in the San Bernardino Valley east of Douglas. They averaged hauling three pickup loads to the local landfill per day.



A typical pickup load of trash hauled by Malpai Borderlands Group workers.

After they accomplished this, they began on-the-job training for restoration of damaged watershed areas. Van Clothier, a specialist in watershed restoration work, trained them. They were later joined by a five-man restoration crew who worked together with the students.



Instructor, College & High School crew repairing a wash eroded due to heavy use by illegal immigrants.



High School students repairing erosion resulting from heavy use by illegal immigrants.

The entire team went through an archaeology and historical training session presented by archaeologist Steve Ross from the Arizona State Land Department.

The five-man crew has also cleaned trash from the right of way along Geronimo Trail Road from the city limits of Douglas to the 14-mile marker. They cleaned a swath approximately 100 yards wide on each side of the road. They hauled an average of 25 bags of trash per day, dumping at least three large pickup loads daily.

They also removed 47 tires and parts of tires that had been rolled off into the bushes. In this area, the Geronimo Trail Road is very close to the international boundary and there is a lot of trash left by the thousands of illegal immigrants that cross the road, get rides, or get picked up by the Border Patrol.

There are areas off of the beaten path where the illegal immigrants have resting spots. The trash is very bad in these areas. There are a few rock areas that are full of small holes, or caves. These are filled with either trash or food supplies, water and blankets for the groups that are using these routes. The work crew cleaned up these areas and hauled loads of trash out. Lots of these areas are not accessible by vehicles, therefore, the trash bags need to be hauled a mile or so to a road.

The restoration work includes repairs of damaged fences, gates, water improvements and erosion caused from countless new migrant foot trails and Border Patrol vehicles driving across open country.

U. S. Customs was called to remove one 40-pound bale of marijuana that was found by a worker in the project area. This bale appeared to have been in the field for several months.

There is no large equipment being used except a flatbed truck and a dump truck that were loaded by hand to deliver rocks close to the restoration work areas. All off-road work has

been done by hand, with trash and restoration materials moved by hand and wheel barrows. There are several miles of restoration work in the water channels, to repair and stop erosion.

In addition, two ranch families have picked up trash and replaced fences and gates that had been knocked down and damaged by the illegal immigrants who go over the fences until they are broken down. The drug vehicles drive through the closed gates and fences destroying fences for several hundred feet. There has been a half of a mile of destroyed fence replaced.



Gate post broken by illegal immigrants climbing over.



Gate repaired.



Note broken gate, illegal immigrant trash and illegal trail along fenceline towards top of photo.



Gate repaired with new post in cement.

See Appendix C for additional photos.

National Park Service

Fort Bowie National Historic Site

BLM entered into an Assistance Agreement with the National Park Service at Chiricahua National Monument/Fort Bowie National Historic Site for \$20,000. These funds were transferred late in FY2003. The National Park Service at Ft. Bowie Historic Site will establish trash teams to remove garbage and debris within the Historic Site. This work will be done in FY2004.

An “Assessment of the Environmental Degradation Caused by Illegal Immigrants at Fort Bowie National Historic Site,” dated August 29, 2003, describes the types of impacts faced at this historic site. More than 180 pounds of trash left by illegal immigrants was cleaned up during the assessment. The assessment is provided in Appendix D.

National Public Lands Day—September 20, 2003

Seventy people, including Coronado National Memorial staff, volunteers, Girl Scout Troup #528, and boy scouts, removed 24 cubic yards of trash from various locations within the Memorial.

See Appendix E for additional details and photos.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

San Bernardino and Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuges

BLM entered into an Assistance Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at San Bernardino and Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuges for \$20,000. The funding was transferred late in FY2003. The refuges will be cleaning up accumulated debris, repairing fences, and installing guard rails along sensitive Leslie Creek to keep illegal immigrant vehicles out of this endangered species habitat. They also will repair damaged improvements and eroded areas caused by illegal immigrant traffic, hire a Special Need Appointment Maintenance Worker to focus on clean-up, repair and maintenance of refuge property caused by illegal immigrants. This work will occur in FY2004.

The following photos depict some of the problems the San Bernardino and Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuges face.



Abandoned vehicle at Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge.



Hole cut in fence at San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge.



Trash left by illegal immigrants in San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge.

U.S. Forest Service

From October 6 -10, 2003, six YCOSA employees camped and worked in the Miller Peak Wilderness along with two to three U.S. Forest Service Sierra Vista Ranger District employees, including one law enforcement officer for security. They provided 24 hours of waste clean up in the wilderness area. Bad weather, injuries and time spent getting the crew and supplies in and out of the remote campsite shortened the hours actually spent cleaning up trash. A Forest Service packer moved the trash out of the wilderness on mules. This took five days of the packer's time. An estimated 21.4 cubic yards of trash were collected and hauled out. Also a fire ring was removed and the area naturalized at the Crest Trail #103/Miller Canyon Trail #106 intersection.

See Appendix F for additional details and photos.

Cochise County

BLM entered into an Assistance Agreement with Cochise County for \$43,600. From September 10, 2003, through December 6, 2003, the county has collected more than three tons of illegally dumped materials, spending about \$12,000. The balance of funds will be used in 2004 to clean up trash dumped by illegal immigrants and smugglers.

Total Cochise County Cleanup Costs as of December 2003

Expenditure	Amount (\$)
7 cases (50 bags each) 60 gal. capacity trash bags	350.00
YCOSA Group	8,000.00
Equipment Cost-Vehicle	1,428.00
Inspector Wages	1,021.00
Solid Waste Driver	48.00
Solid Waste Truck	54.00
Supplies (Camera, Gloves, Water)	916.00
Dump Fees	122.72
Total Expenditures	\$11,939.72

Summary of Cleanup Efforts by Cochise County September 10 through December 6, 2003

Date	Location	Inspectors Used	Personnel Used	Pounds
9/26 & 11/18/03	Palominas	1	1 Ranch Owner	320
9/10, 8/8, 11/24/03	Hereford	1	1 Ranch Owner	120
11/26/03	Sunsites	2	--	200
11/8/03	Ash Canyon	2	8 Volunteers	600
11/17-21/03	Douglas/Bisbee	2	10 Volunteers	4,140
12/6/03	Ramsey Road	2	10 Volunteers	680
Total				6,060 (3.03 tons)



Trash left along Ash Canyon trail by illegal immigrants.



Trash picked up on Star Route 80 between Mile Posts 352 & 354.

Graham County

BLM entered into an Assistance Agreement with Graham County for \$35,000. The county has built a trash trailer and established a citizens committee to identify sites and plan for cleanup and restoration projects.

The citizens committee, Southeastern Arizona Clean and Beautiful (SEACAB), is a grass roots organization whose purpose is to clean up and stop intentional and unintentional litter in Graham County. SEACAB is a voluntary group of concerned citizens who are creating an awareness and prevention of litter through a community effort to clean up litter and to develop a community-based educational program. They have a website at www.seacab.org.

SEACAB spent most of 2003 organizing itself. Most of the funding provided will be used in 2004. The first scheduled community event will be a river cleanup in May 2004. Litter left by illegal immigrants will be the focus of this effort.



Trailer built by Cochise County to haul illegal immigrant trash collected by SEACAP and others.

Santa Cruz County

During the summer of 2003, BLM and Santa Cruz County developed an Assistance Agreement for \$35,000. This funding will be spent in 2004. Projects being considered are within Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and include identification of immigrant routes, identification of resource damage caused by illegal immigration, remediation of selected sites damaged by illegal immigrants (including fence repair and trash pick-up), and bilingual signing. Limited brush removal at historic building sites close to immigrant paths also is being considered to reduce the potential for wildfire damage to historic structures.

Santa Cruz County will provide a supervisor for a work crew for 3 to 3.5 months of work. The crew will be youths from Santa Cruz County who are participating in a workforce development program.

The Town of Marana

BLM entered into an Assistance Agreement with the town of Marana for \$35,000. Marana has been performing work for BLM one or two days a week in the Ironwood Forest National Monument and under the current agreement will continue this schedule for the remainder of 2004 or until the current funding is consumed. The work they are performing includes:

1. Patrol of agreed upon areas to locate and remove illegal immigration trash.
2. Reclamation treatment of impacted vegetation and surface disturbance where necessary.
3. Disposal of used tires and rims collected by BLM.
4. Disposal of trash at the land fill.

BLM hopes to expand the use of the Marana crew in the future to include other types of work such as access control and signing. They are doing an outstanding job. The only limitation the Marana crew has is not being able to go into the far back country and more remote areas. YCOSA crews are being used in these areas.